

A-LIST ELECTRIC GUITARIST - POWER CHORDS 2.0

OPERATION MANUAL



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A-List Electric Guitarist - Power Chords 2.0

Introduction



Electric Guitarist - Power Chords is the second Rack Extension instrument in the A-List series for Propellerhead Reason and Reason Essentials. Think of *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* as a professional session guitarist, playing electric rhythm guitar on a top-notch instrument hooked up to hand-selected vintage amps and cabinets, and performing exactly as you wish, while giving you full control over musical performance and mix.

And there's more: *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* features an on-board, sophisticated amp with speaker cabinets, so that the sound of guitar, amp and speakers is fully under your control.

Whether you want to add realistic rhythm guitar tracks to your productions, use it as an inspiration for writing songs on a train or plane, or as source material for creative sound design - it will get you from idea to result as fast as possible.

At the core of *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* - and all instruments of the Propellerhead A-List series - is the idea that you can create professional sounding instrument tracks exactly the way you would get them from an A-List player in the studio. There, you'd give them a lead sheet, adjust sound character and mix, and tell your session guitarist what kind of musical style and performance you're expecting, and a great player would deliver that.

Electric Guitarist - Power Chords does exactly that for you: the lead sheet becomes MIDI notes in your Reason tracks (or played live on a MIDI controller), there are controls for sound character and mix, you load styles and select phrases in real-time, and there are performance controls to vary the performance.

Whatever *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* does, it does extremely well, fast, and asking absolute minimal effort of you. We never sacrificed instant gratification and simplicity in favor of a more complex result!

Try it now - it's easy and fun!

Electric Guitarist - Power Chords is designed for creating stunning dynamic performances using only a MIDI keyboard, and very simple commands. The perfectly played phrases and styles all come built in. All you need to do is provide chords, pick phrases and optionally make (real-time) adjustments. You can even dynamically control palm muting of the strings for dynamic expression and creation of your own phrasings.

Here's how it basically works - and we encourage you to try it now.

1. Create an *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* device in the rack.

It will load a default style that's all you need for now.

2. Start playing on your connected MIDI keyboard or the built-in Interactive Keyboard.

→ **Hit a key or chord from the note C4 and upwards and *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* will start playing.**

→ **Activate the Latch switch so it keeps playing.**



→ **Hit the note B3 when you want to stop the playback in Latch Mode.**

→ **Move the Mod Wheel on your MIDI keyboard to apply palm muting.**

You can live-control palm muting using the Mod Wheel. Turning up the Mod Wheel gradually increases the pressure of the palm.

→ **Vary the phrasing.**

Pressing keys (or generally: sending MIDI notes) between C1 and Bb3 selects phrases. The lower two octaves select a set of standard phrases, the C3-Bb3 octave selects phrases of the currently loaded style.

→ **Change the sound character.**

Use the Guitar and Amp selectors and the Drive control to vary the overall tone of the guitar sound. Dial in Thrust to add sweeping harmonics to the guitar signal.

→ **Add a second guitar player.**

Activate the Doubling switch in the performance section to activate a second player (similar to overdubbing in the studio), with the players panned left and right in the stereo image.

Background

It is important to know that *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* does not emulate a guitar. It does not let you edit individual notes, but it also does not require you to know how to play a guitar on a keyboard, or to think about how to emulate realistic strumming or typical guitar voicings. It has all that built in, simply because it is based on actual rhythm guitar recordings, not samples of individual notes.

What *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* emulates is therefore a studio guitarist who already knows how to play. Because when you have an idea in your head and want to get it to "tape" the last thing you want to do is having to struggle with MIDI editing and trying to make a MIDI performance sound realistic. What you need is a professional player recording your idea the way you want it. That's exactly what *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* does.

The foundation of *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* is real performances on a top-notch electric guitar, played by a professional player, and a sophisticated amp/speaker simulation for a wide range of styles and colors.

The performances have been recorded with a clean sound and are live-processed through built-in amplifier and cabinet emulations for maximum realism and flexibility. You can totally adjust and perfect the sound character for your musical taste and mix.

During the sessions for *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords*, about 12.000 phrases were played and recorded, totaling more than 11 hours of guitar performances. Those were then meticulously selected, adjusted and prepared in a sophisticated and unique way, allowing us to create a Rack Extension that can virtually play any guitar phrase at any tempo and always sound like an original performance.

Panel overview

The *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* front panel contains the following sections:



Electric Guitarist - Power Chords front panel sections.

- **1. Source section** (for selecting guitar and amp character, adjusting amp gain and choosing drop tuning).
- **2. Performance section** (for telling the "virtual player" which Style to play and for tweaking a few performance parameters).
- **3. Mix section** (for controlling basic guitar-type effects, boosting velocity and energy, and adjusting the volume of the audio output).
- **4. Patch selector** (for browsing, loading and saving patches).
- **5. Interactive keyboard** (for telling the "virtual player" which Phrases and Chords to play).

Loading and saving patches



Loading and saving patches is done in the same way as with any other internal Reason/Reason Essentials device - see the "Sounds and Patches" chapter in the Reason/Reason Essentials Operation Manual pdf for details.

- ! **On instantiating *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords*, or when loading Combinator Patches featuring *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords*, it can take a few seconds until all content is loaded into RAM.**

Panel controls

Source section



In this section, you set up the overall guitar sound by selecting a guitar/pickup character, an amp setup (a configuration and setting of amp and speaker cabinet), setting the level of gain/overdrive and apply drop tuning. These settings are highly interactive - as are the originals. Guitarists and sound engineers will know and apply certain classic combinations of amps, guitars and Drive settings, and you will find many of those in the patches. But that doesn't mean you should not experiment - at the end, the only thing that counts is that it works for your song.

Guitar

The lever switch labeled Guitar lets you select different characteristics, mainly determined by the choice/combination of pickup(s). It offers four distinct choices:

Knob position	Character	Use...
Twang	Single-coil pickup guitar with less mid range, similar to a Telecaster or a Strat with two out-of-phase pickups.	For clean or only subtly overdriven sounds that bring out glassy character with well-defined treble.
Bite	Bridge-pickup Stratocaster character with a lot of bite and sharp upper mids	For tracks you want to cut through a mix. Works better with distorted than with clean amp settings.
Soft	Warm neck pickup sound, very round.	For soft, non-aggressive sounds with a fuller bass. Sounds better with less distortion.
Fat	Rock guitar with bridge Humbucker - lots of power, lots of mids.	For fat rock sounds or clean sounds with powerful mids - probably the most universal setting.

Amp

Electric Guitarist - Power Chords features a sophisticated guitar amp and cabinet simulation - this means the amp sound is not baked into the recordings. Instead, clean recordings are sent into algorithms emulating real amps, giving you full control and flexibility when it comes to setting up, adjusting and realtime-controlling your amp sound.

The Amp knob lets you choose between five amplifier presets for a large range of musical styles. Each preset is a pre-configuration of an amp and a speaker cabinet, including pre-set internal parameters that provide the right character and range of sonic possibilities for each preset:

Knob position	Character	Use...
Clean	California sound, crystal-clear treble, 12" speaker character - the sound those tweed-covered amps are legendary for.	For clean to subtly overdriven sounds, very dynamic.

Knob position	Character	Use...
Crunch	The amp for that bluesy character. Class-A circuit, very smooth transition from clean to overdriven. 4 x 12" cabinet.	When Clean is too clean and Brit is too distorted - this amp is perfect for hybrid clean/overdriven sounds that are so popular in Blues styles.
Cream	The 60s/70s sound, providing a large spectrum from warm, mid-rich clean sounds to the proverbial creamy distortion. 2x12" cabinet.	For mid-heavy power sounds that are warm, yet not too scratchy in the high range.
Brit	THE classic gold/black British rock stack you still see on stages all over the world. Very "British" distortion, raw, powerful character. 4x12" cabinet.	For everything Rock from the 70s until today.
Metal	Big rock stack pre-loaded by a distortion pedal for a fat distortion sound with massive bass and less mids. 4x12" cabinet.	For everything harder, including Metal. Use "Drop D" for extra evil (e.g. Nu Metal).

Drop D

This switch lets you activate what guitarists know as Drop D (or Drop) tuning, used in various guitar applications, for example Nu Metal. In *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords*, all strings get tuned down by 2 semitones, the lowest string plays D.

Therefore, when Drop D is activated (pitch is unaffected, of course), *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* sounds a little thicker and warmer in general. This is most obvious when using distortion.

Drive

This knob adjusts the overdrive level and therefore the amount of distortion of the guitar signal. The effect is very different depending on the Amp setup you've chosen. Naturally, the Guitar and Amp settings at the lower end of the switch will work better with higher Drive settings, whereas the top ones benefit from a higher dose of clean signal.

Performance section



This section is a mixture of selectors, knobs and displays for selecting and adjusting the musical performance.

Styles and Phrases

Electric Guitarist - Power Chords is designed to produce rhythm guitar tracks. As the term indicates, a rhythm guitarist doesn't play melodies, but phrases. A phrase in this context is a rhythmic sequence of strummed chords. A style in *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* is a collection of phrases of a certain musical context. Styles are given descriptive names. Phrases, although, are not named but numbered.

- **As you play from left to right on the keyboard's phrase ranges (C#1 - Bb3), phrases become more intense - i.e. denser and more animated.**

You can add to the dynamic expression of a song by selecting phrases accordingly: As you move from intro to verse to chorus, move right on the phrase selection keys and vice versa.

- ! **The Phrase playback is always triggered by the MIDI Note On; it's not synced to the sequencer's bar position.**

The reason for this is you might not always want the phrase locked to the bar position. This way you can be more creative with re-triggering the phrases and get more "live feel". If you want it locked to the bar position in the sequencer this can still be achieved by positioning the trigger notes and/or switching from the silent phrase at the right moment.

If you change MIDI notes in a legato fashion (tied), the new notes will continue the "phrase-sync" from the previous note.

Style

In this menu, you can select one of the 92 included musical styles. Each style is available in a normal version and one version for chords played in a higher range (Hi). Each style features 11 individual phrases (see "Style Phrases").

Swing

This knob gradually applies a shuffle feel to the guitar performance by delaying the off-beats.

Depending on the selected style, 8th or 16th note off-beats will be affected. At maximum position, the off-beat will have the same timing as the last note of a triplet.

Not all phrases contain 8th or 16th note off-beats so in these cases the Swing control has no effect.

Feel

With this control you can tell the virtual player to push or play laid back, i.e. it affects the overall timing of the guitar performance. Right from center, off-beats will be slightly advanced (Push), left from center they will be delayed (Pull).

Latch

Use this toggle switch to determine if *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* should always keep playing or only when keys are held.

If on, *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* will keep playing after a key is pressed, until either Latch is switched off or the Stop button in the Reason/Reason Essentials sequencer is pressed. You can also temporarily disable playback of a latched chord by pressing the note B3 on your MIDI keyboard.

A sustain pedal can be used as a temporary latch (but does not affect the appearance of the Latch switch). Lifting the sustain pedal unlatches any notes that are no longer held, even if the Latch switch is still on, see "Sustain Pedal".

Doubling

Use this function to create the impression of two independent players playing at the same time.

When on, *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* will add a second guitar player to the currently selected signal and places them at opposite stereo positions.

- ! **Note that - when Doubling is active - *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* automatically activates a second, similarly set-up guitar amp to keep the signals separate and enable the stereo effect.**

Mix section



Effects

The Effects section features essential guitar-type effects:

Effect	Description	Knob controls...
Slapback	A very short delay that adds the illusion of doubling and adds width to the sound. Typical effect of early guitar recordings in Rock'n'Roll.	Wet/Dry, Damping, Time.
Echo	A 4th/8th note stereo delay with damping.	Wet/Dry, Feedback, Damping.
Chorus	A classical 4-voice Chorus, creating a richer, modulated sound.	Wet Signal, Depth, Rate.
Reverb	A typical Spring Reverb that is often found in guitar amps and is essential for many classic guitar sounds.	Wet/Dry, Reverb Time.

Thrust

The Thrust knob is a very unique feature of *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* that lets you change the sound in real-time. It adds a sense of boosted velocity and energy to the sound - hence the name.

Thrust adds harmonics that increase in pitch as you turn the knob. In the real world, these harmonics are created by a special playing technique and are physical sub-vibrations of the guitar strings. While a real guitar would "skip" to these harmonics, Thrust adds them.

The Thrust effect depends greatly on the settings of the Guitar, Amp and Drive controls - from a flanger-like effect in clean settings to very pronounced harmonics at heavily distorted settings.

Thrust becomes even more interesting when you move the control during playback. Thrust is assigned to the Aftertouch MIDI controller. Increasing pressure to your keyboard "turns" the Thrust knob from its set position to maximum (see ["Aftertouch"](#)).

Volume

Adjusts the audio output volume of *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* for maintaining an optimal input level into the mixer or subsequent audio processors.

Interactive keyboard



The interactive keyboard is both a display of received MIDI notes and a working on-screen keyboard. The left side of the keyboard (Standard Phrases and Style Phrases) doesn't make any sound by itself. Here, you control the performance of the guitarist by switching between 34 different phrases. 11 of these phrases are set by the style, the rest are always available. The right side of the keyboard (Chords) determines which chord *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* plays based on the note(s) you send.

! The interactive keyboard does not get recorded. Use a MIDI keyboard or the Reason/Reason Essentials On-screen Piano Keys for this purpose.

Standard Phrases

The lower left of the MIDI keyboard (C#1 - B2) is reserved for a collection of so-called "Standard Phrases". These phrases are "hard-wired" and won't change with the Style selection.

Standard Phrases complement the Style Phrases by phrasings that are more generic and applicable to multiple contexts. Combine them with the Style Phrases for maximum variety.

! Phrases are what you make of them. *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* lets you switch phrases in real-time without interrupting the performance. That's a great way to create dynamic and interesting phrasings of your own.

Style Phrases

Keys in this area select phrases of the currently selected Style (see "Style").

Phrases in the Style range start with the lowest density/intensity on C3 and get more complex as you move towards Bb3.

You could generally work your way through a song going from left (intro, verse) to right (chorus), but of course this greatly depends on the style and your song. Just know you always have 11 different rhythms plus the Standard Phrases at your immediate disposal.

The highest key of the Style Range - B3 - is the Stop key. In Latch mode, pressing this key will stop playback (whereas the Silent key (C1) will keep playback going, just with an empty phrase.

Chords

Keys in the Chord range function almost like a regular musical keyboard: You start and stop the guitarist's performance and you determine the chords played. It's like playing keyboard, except that instead of playing notes you select the chord the guitarist will perform as a phrase.

Electric Guitarist - Power Chords recognizes and plays 11 chord types. The chord choices are naturally limited by the fact that "power chords" have to be "distortion-friendly" and therefore exotic chords are unusable. More on chords and how to make best use of them in "Chord Sets and Fingerings".

Key

This control sets a key for the song, forcing all chord input to the most useful chords in the selected key.

- **In the "Off" position, all chords in all keys are available:**

Played Note:	C	C#	D	Eb	E	F	F#	G	Ab	A	Bb	B
Played back Chord:	C	C#	D	Eb	E	F	F#	G	Ab	A	Bb	B

- **In any other position (C, C#, D, Eb etc.), only the chords matching the set scale are available (see below).** Using the Key parameter is very handy if your keyboard skills (or musical skills) are basic, or if you want to simplify chord input in general, as it will "quantize" all chord input to chords that aren't entirely wrong for the given key.

When a key is set, these are the chords *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* will play depending on the actual input - shown in C:

Played Note:	C	C#	D	Eb	E	F	F#	G	Ab	A	Bb	B
Played back Chord:	C	Csus4	D	Eb	E	F	Fsus4	G	Gsus4	A	Bb	B

The currently played back chord is always displayed in the interactive keyboard display.

Building Custom Phrases

The CV/Gate input on the rear panel of *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* interprets notes differently than the MIDI Input. Notes from C#1 to C#8 don't select phrases and chords, but individual slices of which are laid out across the note range.

You can use this feature to create your own phrases by triggering "slices" (which are individual strums extracted from the original performance). Try it with a Matrix pattern sequencer!

! Note that this just replaces the phrase selection - you will still need to send chord notes via MIDI Input to get the guitarist strumming away!

MIDI Note	Function
C1	Stop currently playing slice.
C#1 to C#8	Trigger individual slices.

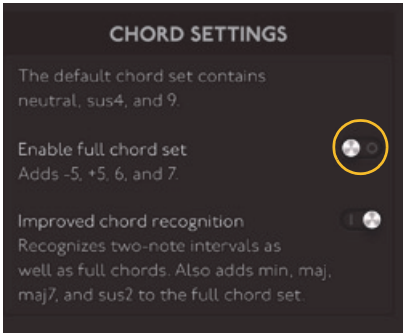
See "CV Input".

Chord Sets and Fingerings

Chord Sets

Chords take up memory in RAM, therefore *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* loads only three chord types by default, although it supports seven different chords.

➔ To load the full chord set, press Tab to get to the rear panel view of *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords*, and activate the toggle labeled "Enable full chord set".



The following selection of chords for the two chord sets is also printed on the rear panel of *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords*:

Default Chord Set:	Neutral, sus4, 9		
Full Chord Set:	Neutral, sus4, 9	-5, +5, 6, 7	
Full Chord Set with Improved Chord Recognition:	Neutral, sus4, 9	-5, +5, 6, 7	min, maj, maj7, sus2

A note on maj and min

There are no "maj" or "min" in a power chord, as omitting the third note is vital for that powerful "power chord" sound. For that reason, when playing single notes in the chord range, *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* will play (and display) neutral chords that work with either major or minor scales.

Chord Fingerings

Electric Guitarist - Power Chords has a built-in chord detection system that interprets incoming MIDI notes. The picture shows the fingering schemes for each variation of chords played in the key of C. The first three chord variations show what is available when you use the default chord set. The next four chord variations become available when enabling the full chord set (see "[Chord Sets](#)"). The remaining four variations becomes available when you use the full chord Set set and activate "Improved Chord Recognition" (see "[Improved Chord Recognition](#)").

! Note that the black and white dots indicate the required notes. Grey dots indicate optional notes.

neutral

sus4

9

9

Alternative fingering

Default chord set

-5

+5 (aug)

6

7

Full chord set

min

maj

maj7

sus2

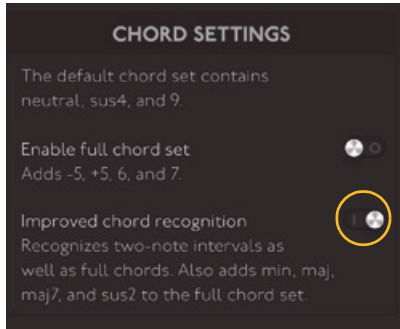
Full chord set with Improved Chord recognition

Chord Fingerings (grey dots indicate optional keys).

Improved Chord Recognition

Optionally, *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* also lets you play intervals and interprets matching chords. For example, when you play C and D at the same time, *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* will interpret this as a sus2 chord.

- **To enable the recognition of two-note intervals, press Tab to get to the rear panel view of *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords*, and activate "Improved chord recognition" using the toggle switch.**



MIDI Controllers

Pitch Bend

The Pitch Bend wheel can be used for creating bending or vibrato. The pitch range is fixed at ± 2 semitones.

Mod Wheel

Palm Muting is a powerful method for live-controlling the phrasing of *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords*.

- **The Mod Wheel controls the Palm Muting that your guitarist applies to the performance.**
In the Mod Wheel's default position, no Palm Muting is applied. The further you turn it up, the shorter the notes will become. The maximum position of the Mod Wheel produces entirely "tone-less" muted strums.
- **You can add Palm Muting after the fact by adding a lane to your *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* track and recording a Mod Wheel performance on top of your notes. Experiment with multiple tracks with different Mod Wheel performances for greatly enhanced live feel and two-player impressions.**

Aftertouch

What Aftertouch does depends on the Thrust knob (see "Thrust"):

- **If the Thrust knob has a value greater than zero, Aftertouch lets you control Thrust in real-time. Pressing the key harder has the same effect as turning up the Thrust knob.**
- **Using Aftertouch with Thrust turned all the way down lets you control Palm Muting. In contrast to the Mod Wheel - which allows you to continuously dial in Palm Muting - Aftertouch works like a switch between "no muting" and "full muting".**

Expression

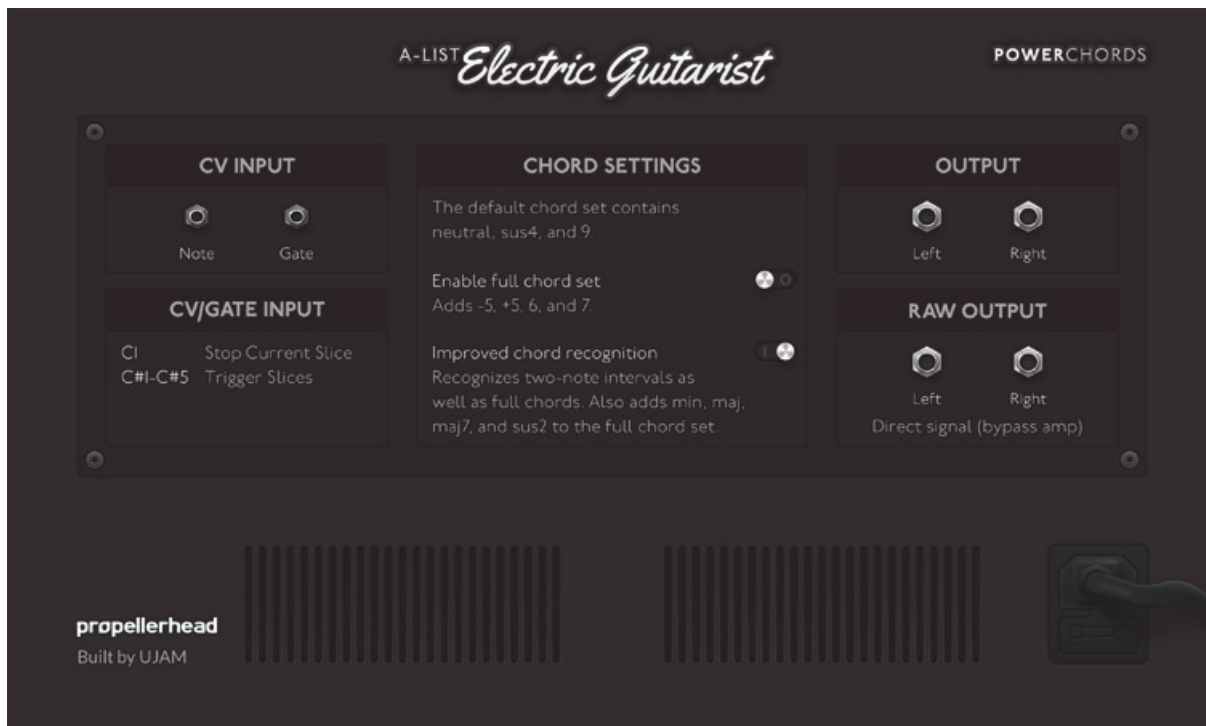
The Expression Controller is used for controlling the volume. The Expression Controller is applied individually to each strum in a phrase, so the volume of the previous step that is still playing is not affected. This can be useful for fine-tuning performances.

- ! **Note that Keyboard Velocity is not used to control volume, as it is difficult to play all notes of a chord with consistent velocity.**

Sustain Pedal

The Sustain Pedal replicates the “[Latch](#)” button, so you can use it as an additional way of varying phrases in real-time. Pressing the Sustain Pedal activates latching of chord notes. Releasing the Sustain Pedal releases any latched chord notes even if the Latch button is on.

Connections



! Remember that CV connections are NOT stored in the *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* patches! If you want to store CV connections between devices, put them in a *Combinator* device and save the *Combi* patch.

CV Input

The Note and Gate CV inputs can be used for adding extra phrase creation options by using the CV output from another CV/Gate device (typically a *Matrix* or an *RPG-8*). Note that the Gate input also responds to keyboard velocity. Please refer to “[Building Custom Phrases](#)” above.

Output

On the right are the main audio outputs. When you create a new *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* device, these outputs are auto-routed to the first available channel in the *Reason/Reason Essentials* main mixer.

Raw Output

The Raw Output jacks let you access the pre-amp signal directly from the pickup. This is useful if you want to connect your own amp. Both channels will output the same signal unless you enable Doubling.

➤ For an even stronger separation of both guitar signals, send each one through its own amp chain.

Advanced tips

Optimizing chord recognition

Electric Guitarist - Power Chords tries to be as tolerant to sloppy chord input as technically possible, but particularly when live-recording to a MIDI track, you may end up with it not playing the chords you had in mind. It's really easy to fix this situation if you keep a few things in mind:

→ **Always quantize your MIDI notes in the sequencer.**

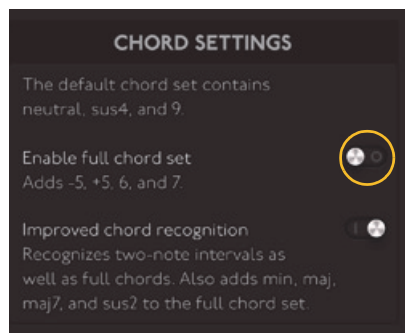
Notes with different starting positions can lead to multiple chords getting recognized one after another, or cut-off chords.

→ **Clean up note lengths to make sure there are no note gaps or overlaps.**

In the Legato Adjustments section of Reasons' Tool Window you can force legato and remove overlaps. Use Gap with a minimum value first to "clean up" the note lengths.

Minimizing memory consumption

How much memory *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* requires entirely depends on the settings of the Chord Set and the Key parameter loaded:



- **The default chord set requires about 240 MB of RAM.**
- **The full chord set increases this figure to around 770 MB.**
- **When setting a key, the allowed chords are all in the default chord set, so if you have the full set selected, you can save memory by switching back to the default chord set on the rear panel of *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords*.**
- **If you use several *Electric Guitarist - Power Chords* devices in your song, the sample memory is shared among the devices whenever possible.**